

Message Text

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TAGS: CI, SHUM, PINT, PFOR
SUBJECT: GOC HARD LINE CREATES CRITICISM FROM SUPPORTERS

REF: (A) SANTIAGO 2026, (B) SANTIAGO 2028, (C) SANTIAGO A-24

1. SUMMARY: KEY CIVILIAN SECTORS HERETOFORE STOUNCHLY BEHIND THE JUNTA HAVE PUBLICLY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S RECENT ACTIONS HAVE GONE TOO FAR. LINKING THEIR CONCERN TO THE FAR-REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR ALL DISSENT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OUTLAWING OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY AND PRACTICES, AND TIGHTER CONTROLS ON PRINTED MATTER, SOME SEE THE GOVERNMENT AS PLYING INTO THE HANDS OF EXTREMISTS. SA FEW, MORE CLOSELY TIED TO THE GOC, HAVE SHOWN THEIR DISSATISFACTION BY STATING THEY WERE NOT CONSULTED ON RECENT IMPORTANT DECISIONS. THOUGH SUCH DISSATISFACTION POSES NO DIRECT THREAT TO THE GOVERNMENT, IT EATS AWAY AT THE BACKING FOR THE REGIME AND RAISES THE POSSIBILITY OF POLARIZATION ALONG CIVILIAN/MILITARY LINES. END SUMMARY.

2. INFLUENTIAL CHILEANS READ IN THE DISSOLUTION OF POLITICAL PARTIES (REF A) AND NEW RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESS (REF B) -- AND EVEN IN A LATE NIGHT FIRE WHICH DESTROYED THE TENT HOUSING A PLAY TWEAKING THE GOVERNMENT -- THE ADOPTION OF AN ALARMINGLY HARD LINE. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS
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(PDC) HAD VIOLATED THE POLITICAL RECESS, AND CLEARLY SHOWING THEIR DISLIKE FOR THE PDC, THESE PERSONS DO NOT ACCEPT THE GOC'S ASSERTION THAT THE DOCUMENTS CIRCULATED BY PDCERS ZALDIVAR AND REYES WERE SUBVERSIVE. THUS THEY QUESTION THE NEED FOR SUCH SEVERE MEASURES, EXPRESS CONCERN AT THE INTERNATIONAL REACTION, AND URGE THE GOC TO DEFINE THE LIMITS OF DISSENT.

3. A PUBLIC STATEMENT MARCH 16 BY YOUTH LEADERS, INCLUDING SOME FROM UNIVERSITIES AND THE GOC-ENDORSED "FRENTE JUVENIL," REFLECTS A NOTALBE PART OF THIS REACTION. THE PRO-GOVERNMENT DRAFTERS STATE THEY WILL NOT COMMENT ON THE POSSIBLE SUBVERSIVE NATURE OF THE PDC DOCUMENTS NOR ON THE TIMING OR APPROPRIATENESS OF THE GOC'S REACTION. THE YOUTHS CONDEMN THE PDC FOR VIOLATING THE RECESS AND FOR BEING SOFZ ON COMMUNISM, BUT THEY ALSO EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOC WILL "OVERCOME THE CONCERTE D ACTION OF CERTAIN FASCISTS OR EXTREMISTS IN GENERAL, WHO SEEK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE CURRENT CITUATION TO SHARPEN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TENSIONS."

4. A BITING EDITORIAL IN CONSERVATIVE "EL MERCURIO" MARCH 13 ALSO WARNS AGAINST EXTERMISM, QUESTIONS WHAT LIMITS THE GOC PLANS TO PLACE ON DISSENT, AND DISCERNS AN ABASEMENT OF THE JUNTA'S 1974 STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES. FOLLOWING ITS USUAL POLICY OF USING ADVERSE INTERNATIONAL REACTION TO JUSTIFY ITS DOUBT, "EL MERCURIO" OBSERVES THAT THE JUNTA'S RECENT DECISIONS ARE NOT IRREVERSIBLE. CONSERVATIVE, PRO-GOC NEWSWEEKLY "QUE PASA" CARRIES AN EDITORIAL MARCH 16 ALONG ROUGHLY THE SAME LINES, BUT ENDING WITH WHAT FOR IT IS A DARING CALL FOR THE GOC TO DEFINE HOW FAR ITS MEASURES GO AND-- AGAIN -- TO WEIGH THE MEASURES AGAINST THE JUNTA'S OWN STATEMENTS OF PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT. THE PRESS ASSOCIATION MARCH 16 SAID IT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF NEW PRESS RESTRICTIONS AND WOULD TAKE UP THE MATTER WITH THE GOC'S DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AS SOON AS HE RECOVERED FROM AN ILLNESS.

5. THE CIVILIAN CHAIRING THE COMMISSION CHARGED WITH DRAFTINT EH NEW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSTITUTION -- NOTED HERETOFORE FOR HIS ABSOLUTE SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT -- CHOSE THIS WEEK TO STATE THAT THE COMMISSION HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT AN INEPTLY WORDED AMENDMENT TO ONE OF ITS CONSTITUTIONAL ACTS ISSUED THE END OF JANUARY (REF C). HE SAID THE ORIGINAL WORDING OF THE ACT -- AS DRAFTED BY THE COMMISSION -- PROBABLY GAVE THE GOC ALL THE AUTHORITY IT NEEDED, BUT IF THE GOVERNMENT WATED MORE THE COMMISSION WOULD HAVE AT LEAST PROVIDED WORDING THAT DID NOT CHANGE THE SUBSTANCE (THE JANUARY MODIFICATION AIMED AT SHUTTING OFF LEGAL APPEAL TO A RADIO STATION CLOSED BY THE GOC, BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT OPEND HABEAS CORPUS APPEALS FOR INDIVIDUALS DURING PERIODS OF EMERGENCY AUTHORITY): IN SUM, A BACKHANDED WAY OF DISASSOCIATING THE COMMISSION FROM RECENT GOC ACTIONS.

6. CIVIL JUDGES CONTINUED TO SHOW INDEPNDEC. A MILITARY/CIVIL APPEALS COURT SPLIT 3-2 AGAINST ENTERTAINING A FURTHER APPEAL BY THE CLOSED RADIO STATION (PDC-CONTROLLED BALMACEDA ARGUED THAT IT HAD BEEN CLOSED FOR THE FURATION OF THE EMERGENCY PERIOD, AND THAT PERIOD ENDED MARCH 11, WHEN THE OLD ONE RAN OUT AND THE

JUNTA IMPOSED A NEW ONE). ONE CIVILIAN AND ONE RETIRED MILITARY JUSTICE FAVORED FURTHER PROCEEDINGS.

7. RUMORS OF RESIGNATIONS FROM SOME MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENTIALLY APPOINTED ADVISORY BODY, THE COUNCIL OF STATE, CIRCULATED AND WERE DENIED. WE KNOW OF NO RESIGNATIONS, BUT JUAN DE DIOS CARMONA, APPARENTLY SPEAKING FOR THE COUNCIL, SAID THAT PRESIDENT PINOCHET HAD NOT CONSULTED IT ABOUT THE THE GOC'S RECENT ACTIONS AFFECTING CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS. CARMONA, A CONSERVATIVE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT WHO RESIGNED FROM THE PARTY WHEN HE JOINED THE CONCIL, ALSO WROTE A STRONG DEFENSE OF THE INTEGRITY OF EX-PRESIDENT EDUARDO FREI IN HIS COLUMN IN THE REVAMPED, PRO-GOVERNMENT "ERCILLA" MARCH 16. BY SO DOING, HE IMPLIED THAT HIS SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT HAD ITS LIMITS.

8. COMMENT: THE FOREGOING SAMPLING INDICATES TO US THAT THE JUNTA IS MOVING INTO UNCHARTED WATERS, AND INCREASING ITS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ISOLATION FROM SIGNIFICANT SECTORS OF THE SOCIETY THAT HAVE BEEN ITS FIRM SUPPORTERS SINCE THE COUP. PRESSURES ON IT TO PULL BACK SEEM TO BE BUILDING. MEANWHILE, A BASIC CRYSTALLIZATION OF OPINION MAY BE OCCURING. IF THE GOVERNMENT PROVES UNRESPONSIVE, AS IS LIKELY, EROSION OF THE REGIME'S BACKING MAY RESULT.
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